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E26

PAGE 01
ACTION SCT-02

BOGOTA 04480 01 OF 02 252004Z

RELEASED IN PART
B6, B1, 1.4(D)

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	AID-00	INR-10	SS-00	CIAE-00	EB-00
	DODE-00	NSCE-00	ARA-00	NSAE-00	COME-00	SSO-00	L-03
	TRSE-00	PM-10	PA-01	FAAE-00	CCO-00	INM-07	INRE-00
	CA-02	USSS-00	USIE-00	JUSE-00	DEAE-00	FBIE-00	OC-02
	DOEE-00	M-01	NRC-02	FAIM-01	DS-01	DSE-00	P-02
	T-01	/045 W					

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R 252005Z MAR 88
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4999
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 04480

E.O. 12356: DECL OADR
TAGS: PINS PGOV CO
SUBJECT: GUERRILLA VIOLENCE UPDATE; OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM
EMPLOYEE RELEASED; FARC AND ELN SUFFER LOSSES;
ASSASSINATIONS CONTINUE

REF: BOGOTA 04192; BOGOTA 03978

1. (C) SUMMARY:

GUERRILLAS RELEASED

ALONG WITH TWO JOURNALISTS THEY KIDNAPPED
LAST WEEK. IN AN UNUSUAL TURN OF EVENTS, POLICE UNITS
HIT ELN AND REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA
(FARC) INSURGENTS HARD, KILLING ELEVEN GUERRILLAS, WHILE
ARRESTING TWENTY FIVE MEMBERS OF THE ARMY OF POPULAR
LIBERATION (EPL) OVER THE MARCH 19 WEEKEND.
NONETHELESS, GUERRILLA ATTACKS CONTINUE AT A HIGH PACE.
LED BY THE ELN, INSURGENT INSTIGATED VIOLENCE HAS
CLAIMED THE LIVES OF SEVERAL PEASANTS AND A CONSERVATIVE
LEADER IN NORTE DE SANTANDER. END SUMMARY

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2. (U) FOLLOWING 376 DAYS AS A HOSTAGE OF THE DOMINGO
LAIN FRONT OF THE ELN, OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM EMPLOYEE AND
CANADIAN CITIZEN RICK PAULSON WAS SET FREE OVER THE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED
DATE/CASE ID: 05 JUL 2007 200603798

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MARCH 19 WEEKEND. RELEASED WITH HIM WERE THE TWO JOURNALISTS TAKEN MARCH 15 (REFTEL). [REDACTED] KIDNAPPED MARCH 8, 1987, WHILE SERVING AS OCCIDENTAL'S SUPERINTENDENT OF PRODUCTION IN ARAUCA. [REDACTED]

B6

B1, B6

[REDACTED] THE JOURNALISTS WERE SET FREE IN BOYACA, FROM WHENCE THEY TRAVELED TO BOGOTA AND THE CANADIAN EMBASSY.

3. (U) UNCOMMON GUERRILLA SETBACKS: POLICE FORCES CLASHED WITH FARC AND ELN GUERRILLAS IN THE EARLY HOURS OF MARCH 21, KILLING SEVEN INSURGENTS IN CAUCA AND ARAUCA DEPARTMENTS. UNLIKE THEIR USUAL ONE-SIDED VICTORIES, A FARC AMBUSH OF A POLICE PATROL NEAR SIBERIA IN CAUCA WENT AWRY FOR THE INSURGENTS, WHO LOST THREE OF THEIR NUMBER IN THE ACCOMPANYING FIREFIGHT. THE POLICE FOUGHT OFF THE GUERRILLA ATTACK, LOSING ONLY ONE MAN. IN A MIRROR-LIKE OPERATION, ELN INSURGENTS WERE DRIVEN OFF BY STIFF POLICE RESPONSE TO A DYNAMITE ATTACK ON A STATION IN BETOYES, ARAUCA DEPARTMENT. THE GUERRILLAS REPORTEDLY LOST FOUR OF THEIR NUMBER. FOUR MORE ELN GUERRILLAS FELL IN CLASHES WITH SECURITY FORCES AROUND NECHE, ANTIOQUIA ON MARCH 23. AS REPORTED IN THE BOGOTA DAILY "EL ESPECTADOR", SECURITY FORCES ARRESTED 25 SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF THE EPL IN QUINDIO, RISALDA, AND VALLE. MOREOVER, MILITARY SWEEPS UNCOVERED AND DISMANTLED AN EXTENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK BELIEVED TO BELONG TO THE GROUP, CAPTURING LARGE QUANTITIES OF RADIO EQUIPMENT, WEAPONS, AND PROPAGANDA. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. (U) THE KILLINGS CONTINUE: APPARENTLY UNDETERRED BY SETBACKS, ELN GUERRILLAS CONTINUED THEIR TERRORIST WAVE AND MURDERED SEVERAL PEOPLE OVER THE PAST WEEK. GUERRILLAS ASSASSINATED FOUR CAMPESINOS IN SUCRE DEPARTMENT AND GUNNED DOWN CONSERVATIVE CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, ALVARO AREVALO, NEAR HIS HOUSE IN OCANA, NORTE DE SANTANDER DEPARTMENT.

5. (U) THE SECURITY CHIEF OF MEDELLIN'S CONSERVATIVE DAILY "EL COLOMBIANO" WAS MURDERED WHILE WALKING WITH HIS SMALL DAUGHTER IN THE EARLY HOURS OF MARCH 23. THIS FOLLOWS TWO OTHER ATTACKS ON THE NEWSPAPER, THE FIRST BEING THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO KIDNAP NEWLY ELECTED MEDELLIN MAYOR AND OWNER OF "EL COLOMBIANO", JUAN GOMEZ

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MARTINEZ, LAST NOVEMBER. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY THE MARCH 10 BOMBING OF THE NEWSPAPER OFFICES. NOBODY HAS TAKEN CREDIT FOR THE MURDER, ALTHOUGH MANY SUSPECT THE TRAFFICKERS, CONSIDERED THE ARCHITECTS OF THE PREVIOUS ATTACKS.

6. (C) COMMENT: GUERRILLA VIOLENCE CONTINUES AT THE HIGH RATE IT SET AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR. THE ELN, FORMED IN 1964 WITH THE HELP OF FIDEL CASTRO, IN PARTICULAR SEEMS TO BE SPEARHEADING THE WIDENING CAMPAIGN OF TERROR. ITS INCREASED ACTIVITIES CERTAINLY LEAD TOWARD THE CONCLUSION THAT THE GROUP IS SEEKING TO EMERGE AS COLOMBIA'S PREMIER TERRORIST ORGANIZATION. WHAT IS LESS EVIDENT IS WHETHER ELN ACTIONS WILL SET IT AT ODDS WITH THE FARC, THE TOP INSURGENT GROUP HERE SINCE LATE 1985. ELN ACTIONS COULD LEAD TO RENEWED CLASHES BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS UNLESS THEY ARE PART OF AN AGREED OVERALL GUERRILLA STRATEGY. THE GROUP'S APPARENT LEADER IS A SPANISH EX-PRIEST, MANUEL PEREZ. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS HAVE HIGHLIGHTED HIS FOREIGN ORIGIN

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TO EXPLAIN HIS LACK OF CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL
DAMAGE THE ELN HAS CAUSED THROUGH ITS REPEATED BOMBINGS
OF THE CANO LIMON-COVENAS OIL PIPELINE.
MCLEAN

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